

Former Admiral takes issue with some findings of the controversial UN Goldstone Report on military conduct in Gaza

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Washington, D.C. – Congressman Sestak's review of the Goldstone Report, which was initiated by the United Nations Human Rights Council to investigate the Gaza conflict, moved him to issue the following statement:

"A safe and secure Israel in a peaceful Middle East is vitally important not only for Israelis, but also for the security of the United States and the future of the democratic world; Israel serves as a vital ally to the United States and the unique U.S.-Israeli friendship must be preserved and strengthened for generations to come,"

"That is why, on January 8, I voted for House Resolution 34, recognizing Israel's right to defend itself against attacks from Gaza, reaffirming the United States' strong support for Israel, and supporting the Israeli-Palestinian peace process,"

"Last December, Israel had a fundamental right to take military action to end the missile strikes originating from the Gaza strip. I strongly condemn Hamas for its terrorist actions, and have concerns with certain findings of the Goldstone report. As the former Director of the Navy's Anti-Terrorism Unit, I recognize the challenges Israel's military faced against an enemy without uniforms with many combatants who practice terrorism as an acceptable tactic.

"Results of the fighting in Gaza and the rocket attacks into Western Israel should give everyone - on all sides of this most challenging issue-- pause to reflect on the violence sustained by both actors. I also agree with members of the Israeli Government that the Goldstone report could have been more balanced if Israel had cooperated with the investigation and I look forward to reviewing its internal assessments."

"Furthermore, I believe this particular conflict could have been avoided entirely if the United States had been engaged over the past eight years in the kind of focused diplomatic outreach towards both Israel and the Palestinians that President Obama and Special Envoy Mitchell are now pursuing. The recent trilateral meeting hosted by the President is the latest example of his Administration's commitment to ending violence in the Middle East, and I continue to support this noble-- and necessary-- goal."